DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 059 445 AC 012 306

AUTHOR McKee, John M.
TITLE New Directions in Corrections.
PUB DATE Oct 71
NOTE 15p.; Presented at the Annual Conference of the Hawaiian Corrections Association, October 14, 1971

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Behavioral Science Research; *Correctional Rehabilitation; *Corrective Institutions; *Cost Effectiveness; Court Litigation; *Federal Government; Leadership; Legislation; Objectives; Organizational Change; Psychology; Social Influences; Standards; *State Legislation

ABSTRACT

A picture of the American prison situation in the past and in its present changing form is presented. The object of the correctional community is becoming more and more that of successfully reintegrating the ex-offender into the social community from which he has been separated. It is predicted that within the next five years: (1) Every state will have in operation some form of work-release and study-release program; (2) Most states will have home furloughs for prisoners; (3) Most states will have abandoned the notion of constructing prisons for more than 400 men; and (4) Several states will have adopted "performance-contingent" parole; (5) The legislatures of at least 10 states and the entire federal system will demand accountability in correctional programming; (6) The U.S. Supreme Court will rule that state institutions maintain certain standards to guard against making men worse from imprisonment; (7) Behavior analysis will be the common baseline of correctional rehabilitation; and (8) Courts and prosecuting attorneys will divert the offender to community-based programs. It is concluded that with respect to Hawaii, the state is on the threshold of offering advanced leadership to all who would seek new directions in integrating the offender back into the social community of American citizens. (CK)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED 059445

NEW DIRECTIONS IN CORRECTIONS[1]

John M. McKee, Ph.D.
Rehabilitation Research Foundation
Elmore, Alabama 36025

Corrections, in the past twenty years, has taken many steps toward altering its system and its processes; some have been progressive and improving, some perhaps not. But regardless of what our personal opinions are about our immediate history in corrections, one positive reality has evolved and emerged. We are now on the threshold of a forward leap into correctional reform which *can* prove more productive and more exciting than all which has gone before.

Now, perhaps more than ever before, does the entire correctional community have its eyes focused upon a single, overall objective; and that objective is the successful reintegration of the ex-offender into the social community from which he has been separated. Now, also, has it become clearly apparent that we must effect our objective by attacking the problems of corrections both from within and without the institution, both in the prison and in the community. Possibly most important of all, we now find ourselves with emerging technologies and financial resources which can effectively do the job.

Evidence for the positive future which I see on the correctional horizon comes from advances and programs scattered throughout American corrections. Based on such existing evidence I would like to offer a number of predictions which I see becoming the realities of corrections in the next five years. I predict that:

1. Every state will have in operation some form of work-release and study-release program.
2. Most states will have home furloughs for prisoners.
3. Most states will have abandoned the notion of constructing prisons for more than 400 men; several states will be experimenting with institutions of less than 100. Many states will be moving to break up institutions over 1,000 into smaller units.

---

[1]Presented at the Annual Conference of the Hawaiian Corrections Association, October 14, 1971.

AC012306

4. Several states will have adopted "performance-contingent" parole--an objective paroling system modeled after that at the Karl Holton School for Boys, a youth correctional facility in California.
5. The legislatures of at least 10 states and the entire federal system will demand accountability in correctional programming on a cost-effectiveness basis.
6. The U. S. Supreme Court will rule that state institutions maintain certain standards to guard against making men worse from the experience of imprisonment. In addition, the deprivation of economic, social, and political liberties of prison releasees will be declared unconstitutional.
7. The emerging behavior technology that we see today--call it behavior analysis, operant conditioning, contingency management, behavior modification--will be the common baseline of correctional rehabilitation.
8. Courts and prosecuting attorneys will, by and large, divert the offender to community-based programs, which will be vastly increased in numbers. This diversion will have a significant effect on reducing prison populations nationwide.

The truth of these positive predictions is in the making. The chief support behind correctional reform is not, however, a great liberal, humanitarian awakening of the public. The great changes that are already taking place are generated by *money*--over seven hundred million dollars already appropriated by the Congress to the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. Instances of misuse of these funds aside, very significant changes are under way. Extensive professional manpower training programs in the nation's colleges and universities are in process, and the leadership of corrections is quickly moving into the hands of technically trained and skilled people. The momentum is increasing, and the only thing that can slow it down is a cutback in funds, which doesn't appear likely.

Toward a New Concept of Imprisonment

At this moment we are on our way to destroying, bit by bit, the old concept of the *prison*--the bastille, the monolithic warehouse, the colossus of failure. Everybody's calling it bad names--"factories of crime," says Ramsey Clark; an actual "human cage," says *Time Magazine*. Newspaper editorials, before and after Attica, viciously attack a means of deterring and controlling crime that, in fact, appears to set the conditions for *increasing* crime by insuring that criminal behavior and skills will be enhanced and deepened by a sojourn in a correctional institution.

Prisons are bankrupt as business institutions, too. There hasn't been a free enterprise notion to hit prison industries since they were created. Lately, though, some state legislatures are allowing some limited competition with "free-world" industries. I have often wondered what the outcome would be if a state Chamber of Commerce would sit as a state board of corrections and be given an honest mandate to improve the business practices of its prisons. The changes the new board would recommend stagger the imagination. Presently, these representatives of business and industry make few contributions to solving the problem of prison cost and prison waste. There is a reason for this lack of involvement, and it doesn't pivot totally around the dollar either. Businessmen are like the rest of us: they have no solutions for crime either.

Thus, prisons are society's way of walling off the life of inmates and their treatment from public gaze--like mental patients--so that citizens can then rest easy, feeling secure and often self-righteous about punishing those who commit wrong. But this reaction is *not* the whole story. The fact is, we cannot afford the luxury of extensive humanitarianism when we don't have reasonable and reliable alternatives, such as community treatment and control programs, to fall back on. It is not with a vengeance, usually, that a judge sentences a man or a youth to imprisonment. Judges say every day, "If *only* there were an alternative–I'd keep him in his community," for they believe that jailing frequently does harm. And for even those who profit from imprisonment, there is every reason to believe that a substitute action could accomplish the same sobering, maturing result. The judge, the police officer, the district attorney--all in the criminal justice system who have really seen a prison, some allowing themselves to be locked up overnight--will tell you of its dehumanizing pressures, its horrors.

The great penologist, Frank Tannenbaum (1922), wrote:

> We must destroy the prison, root and branch. That will not solve our problem, but it will be a good beginning...Let us substitute something. Almost anything will be an improvement. It cannot be worse. It cannot be more brutal and more useless. A farm, a school, a hospital, a factory, a playground--almost anything different will be better.

There is not an experienced correctional leader today who won't agree with that statement. In fact, they will say, unswervingly, that no more than 15 percent need be in prison as a means of protecting society from personal injury. This is not to say that others do not need supervision and controlled training, but they don't need to be caged. In fact, no human being deserves or requires caging. Security and surveillance is corrections' easiest problem, yet, that's where all the money is going. Less than 10 percent of the

corrections' budget is going into what we generally call treatment. Before triple fences, electronic beams, hot wires, and television scanners came into existence, escapes from maximum security institutions were less than 3 percent. With all the dehumanizing gadgetry that deprives a man of every last bit of privacy, we can shave off only 1 percent. What a price to pay when you consider the fact that the most dangerous criminals, the cleverest, are *not* locked up and that prisons contain only 20 percent of the felons, meaning that 80 percent are active now in our communities!

Creating a Physical Climate for Change

Before I describe feasible and effective alternatives to prisons as we know them today, I shall tell you what I (and others) think should be done about present conditions and why. First of all, should I possess the power to do so, I would pass a law prohibiting the construction of anything that would house over 100 men. I would allow for small experimental units with flexible and comfortable space for living, working, recreation, and learning. The facility would be near a great university where intellectual resources are available, and near a fair-size city where a variety of jobs can be had. I would have no fences, of course, around the facility. You wouldn't be able to distinguish the custodial force from the treatment team--they would be one and the same. For the separation of these two functions follows no behavioral science model or any rational or functional scheme of things. The dichotomy only reinforces the manipulative behavior of inmates, for they have something to gain from a polarization of the two types of staff.

After an inmate's significant progress in this program, it may even be difficult to distinguish him from staff. As he progresses through developmental stages, an inmate may even *become* staff. This isn't as unreasonable or unworkable as one might think. For in our Experimental Manpower Laboratory for Corrections at Draper Correctional Center, four ex-prisoners are employed as staff–and one in a supervisory position. All went through what one might call a "new careers" program.

I want to return now to that monolithic institution that we abandoned for an alternative facility. The large prison must be phased out and ultimately destroyed. Of course this will be expensive to accomplish. It has been estimated that it will cost fifteen billion dollars to construct all the small facilities required for medium and maximum security inmates in the United States. Minimum security inmates, of course, could go to community-based facilities and even some of those would be designated as medium security.

Why is it necessary to have no more than 100 men in a building complex? There are two basic reasons. One is that with more than this, the number of variables that will have to be controlled will be astronomical. And in order to affect the sort of behavior changes that are necessary, we must get *all* relevant variables under maximum control on a 24-hour basis. The second reason for the small facility is that it tends to a very essential and powerful need, that of the inmate's having access to the source of power--the warden himself, who controls the destiny of his charges, who in fact may decide matters of life and death. Wherever the power resides, the inmate must have access to it--for his security and relief from anguish--in order to drain tensions that can be explosive; and for perhaps a moral requirement, namely, that a person who holds such power should be in almost continuous contact with those on whom he would exercise it. In modern prisons of several hundred to more than thousands, the seat of power rarely leaves the front office. The warden spends most of his human contact time with his staff, except for inmate committee meetings and when crises occur. Studies of the behavior of wardens show they spend less than 5 percent of their time interacting with prisoners where they are--in their cells, the dining hall, in recreational areas, or where they are learning. Most wardens, so one study showed, don't believe they should "get close" to those they supervise--a myth stemming from how we thought prisoners should be treated during the 1920's and 30's.

Current practice is that grievances of inmates go up the chain of command--starting with an inmate committee. But most gripes shouldn't be brought to a committee anyway. Individual gripes, complaints, frustrations, needs, and problems should be spontaneously expressed and communicated often and freely to the seat of power. This can't be done when a warden is inaccessible, where there are three safety gates separating him from his charges. But the point is, how can the warden interact with 2,000 men? With even 500 on an intimate basis?

At present, conflict is inevitable and it will go on until we tear down the prisons themselves and substitute in their place the kind of living quarters and homes that a man, though an offender, by right of his humanity, is entitled to. I can assure that it will be less costly, for little rehabilitation and behavior change can take place in the present structures. At best, we can merely set up a holding operation until we build smaller facilities to replace the architectural monstrosities of our state and federal prisons.

Toward Cost-Effectiveness

Work-Release and Study-Release

Now I want to turn to the predictions that I led off this presentation with. Take the first one: work-release and study-release. These programs are eminently feasible; they not only save the state money but they very likely contribute to the rehabilitation process. Work-release is now in effect in many states, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and the D. C. Department of Corrections.

Study-release is not a new concept, but it is one that is taking hold in many states. This program takes patterns--inmates go to colleges, colleges come to prisons, and inmates go to MDTA programs in the community or to a trade school. Everybody knows that they are prisoners, but everybody accepts them and reinforces their positive behavior. As the more youthful drug addicts and marijuana cases go to prison, the more demand there will be for study-release.

Home Furlough

Another prediction stated that most states will allow home furloughs for prisoners. This is similar to a weekend pass, or leave, which permits prisoners to maintain family ties and provides a socially approved way of meeting their sexual needs. I think this alternative is quite superior to conjugal visits, though I can see a need for them for those prisoners considered too dangerous to be allowed to have furloughs. But privileges, such as furloughs, need to be put on a performance-contingent basis. That is, inmates should earn this privilege, since it is a very powerful incentive, or reinforcer, for positive behavior. Already a number of states have a furlough program in effect, and the results are astoundingly positive. Absconding is less than 1 percent.

Accountability

Another prediction was that in five years legislatures in a number of states and the entire federal system will demand accountability and correctional programming on a cost-effectiveness basis. Remember that a large group of technicians are now being trained in the colleges and universities in the country that will be manning the correctional programs of the immediate future. They are being taught that correctional programs ought to have *measurable* objectives and that there should be methods designed to achieve these objectives. A broad objective stated by most prison officials is that of rehabilitation. But this objective is far too general to have meaning. Thus, the staff must establish measurable criteria and definitions of rehabilitation so that the effects of training and treatment programs can be determined.

An important concept to establish with regard to correctional objectives is that every activity does not have to stand or fall on the ultimate criterion of recidivism reduction. It is a mistake to do this, for two reasons. First, there is no universally acceptable definition of recidivism; and second, many of the variables affecting recidivism behavior reside in the events that occur in the community after a man is released--events that the institutional program can hardly override even with graduated release, or prerelease, and similar programs.

Institutional programs, then, can without reproof have as objectives the development of a wide range of basic educational, vocational, and personal-social coping skills, which can provide the releasee with alternative, more functional behaviors required for successful community living.

Legal Rights

Recently a federal court ruled that the state could not maintain a patient in a mental hospital against his will without offering him treatment that met recognized professional standards. I predict that the federal court system will soon require states to meet certain minimum standards of institutional care and treatment, perhaps adopting the accreditation standards of the American Correctional Association. The effect of this ruling will be of great program consequence--as well as expense to the states. In addition, I believe that the federal courts will declare unconstitutional the discriminations of a political, social, and economic nature that are made against the ex-offender. For example, unfair employment practices–refusal to hire ex-offenders and discriminatory pay scales–will be ruled unconstitutional. Moreover, social and political limitations placed on parolees and ex-offenders will probably be ruled unconstitutional. Quite likely the court will maintain that state laws and parole regulations are not valid if they prohibit parolees from behaving like the rest of the nation's citizens. Such a ruling may mean that parole boards can only revoke a parole for the commission of a misdemeanor or another felony.

Behavioral Methodology

Another prediction I made concerned the adoption by institutions and paroling authorities of what has come to be known as "performance-contingent" parole. Parole–early release–is a positive contingency working for corrections, but its power to change inmate behavior has rarely if ever been systematically harnessed. Opportunity for parole makes institutional life bearable, gives hope to thousands of prisoners who could easily be induced to acts of desperation and violence. However, not only are too many men and women

required to serve out their full time, nullifying frequently the need for community supervision and control, most prisoners–and I must say most parole boards too–have no specific requirements for obtaining paroles. What can a prisoner do with the advice: "straighten up and fly right and you *might* get a parole"? The reason he's in prison is that he's never learned to heed this advice. The performance-contingent concept requires precise specification of those behaviors and skills–developed through an individualized assessment and prescriptive process–necessary to earn parole.

An exemplary project of performance-contingent parole is now under way at the Karl Holton School for Boys in Stockton, California, under the direction of Drs. Carl Jesness and William DeRisi (1971). The ward earns the right to appear before the Youth Authority Board for parole consideration. He begins working toward parole within minutes after his arrival at the school. Weekly contingency contracts specify the behavior changes required of him in areas of "convenience behaviors" (those behaviors which make it convenient for staff to operate the institution), academic performance, and "critical behaviors" (those which probably resulted in his commitment to the institution). Achievements toward meeting his goal are registered in points, those specifically required being different for each behavior area and for each youth. Through such a system, an inmate doesn't get parole by simply "doing his time" or by merely conforming to institutional rules. He must change, and by changing, he will earn his way to freedom. This system has the potential of teaching the offender the relationship between what he does and the consequences of what he does–an experience he has had too infrequently. Hopefully, these changes will generalize to the free-world community.

The effect on parole boards that adopt performance-contingent parole principles will be significant. They will be required to work very closely with prison authorities and treatment teams to establish objective criteria for parole, resulting in sounder and more valid actions by the board. But the most important effect will be that prisoners will at long last know what is specifically expected of them. Training and counseling then will take on new meaning and value to both inmate and staff. Performance-contingent parole, in fact, could contribute much to the reduction of institutional tensions and disturbances.

Steps Toward Community Corrections

One of the more significant predictions I've made concerns community corrections. Corrections must be viewed as a continuous process, and institutional programs should be geared to preparation for release. There are helpful steps that can be taken toward the objective of release by the institution.

At present, correctional institutions create an artificial world for the inmate, a world which has very little in common with the other world to which most of the inmates will eventually return. Its architecture, living quarters, rules and regulations, and limitations on movement have little similarity to the community. In many state prisons, work is used as punishment, making it quite understandable that prisoners learn to avoid and escape work. And work is especially meaningless when you are not paid for it. The tag plant, the cotton field, the road camp require labor which will have no counterpart later. This is not a plea for idleness--that's dangerous--but instead a plea for relevant work, prison industries that train people for *similar* jobs on the outside.

To best prepare a man for release it is essential that correctional institutions simulate as closely as possible free-world experiences, social interactions, living and working conditions, and so forth. Simulation can take the form of graduated release where prisoners can experience future living requirements in step-wise progression and under controlled conditions that insure decompression. Work-release is an example of graduated release, as is home furloughs. Halfway houses and other forms of community-based programs have as their common objective the simulation and gradual accommodation to free-world living. To introduce a man who has been locked up for five years to a world that he has forgotten, that he never learned how to live in effectively in the first place, to a community that is as uncertain of him as he is of it, can be as cruel as keeping him locked up when he is ready to get out. Abrupt release is, for many, a way to insure failure, for they will certainly gravitate toward those people and those experiences which were once reinforcing to him. Simulation is based upon the behavior principle of shaping certain types of essential adjustive behaviors. It is usually not systematically practiced, but, whenever it is, simulation comes closer to insuring postrelease success than all other types of institutional training.

Community Corrections–What it is and Why Needed

Both the successes and failures of agencies and institutions in reducing crime and recidivism offer considerable experience and data that suggest community corrections as an effective avenue of treatment. For example, the Rehabilitation Research Foundation has demonstrated the positive effects of manpower training via basic education, occupational skills, and interpersonal relations (McKee, 1968). However, recognizing the negating influences of the prison environment upon trainees, the Foundation is conducting research in the effects of a token economy. The token economy operates within Draper

Correctional Center, attempting to shape behaviors in the areas of interpersonal relationships, self-maintenance, and attendance that may compete successfully with the maladaptive behaviors shaped by the prison environment (Milan, 1971).

The effects of the token economy and the extent of behavioral generalization across different settings and to the postrelease environment may only be extrapolated from longitudinal study. There are obvious limitations in sufficiently simulating the free-world environment in institution-based training and rehabilitation programs. Further, the usual abrupt unconditional or parole release of offenders into the community, without benefit of transitional facilities which afford gradual, protective programs of reintegration, frequently results in the quick loss of newly acquired, fragile behaviors and skills. Though some progress is being made, still more effective programs must be undertaken to neutralize the negative effects of institutional environments upon the offender. Simultaneously, effort must be put forth to remediate the offender's pre-adjudication problems. Agencies offering alternatives to imprisonment, e.g., pre-trial diversion and probation, must adopt, expand, and continue to refine known and effective methods for both adult and juvenile offenders.

Community corrections, however, can't be conducted in a vacuum. Many community agencies lack adequate professional personnel trained in the specific behavioral sciences relating to the problems of the offender. The shortage of professional staff has led some agencies to train and utilize paraprofessionals and volunteers, under the supervision and guidance of professional staff. Those essential and effective services which do exist for the ex-offender are rarely well coordinated with other agencies. Evidence indicates that no single approach toward the treatment of the offender has been greatly successful and that the social conditions and behaviors associated with crime are probably proportionate in diversity to the differential approaches needed (The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967).

The lack of coordination and delivery of support services to ex-offenders was amply pointed up in a recent survey of community services available to the ex-offender in Montgomery, Alabama, listing 22 agencies and groups who viewed themselves as having resources to aid the ex-offender. Many stated that they had no definite policies or methods of delivery of assistance to the ex-offender. There were numerous indications of overlapping responsibilities, but there was practically no evidence of coordination and sharing of information on behalf of the ex-offender needing help. Delivery of services for the most part required the ex-offender to visit the agency. In the case of most agencies, there was very little evident appreciation for the concept of "outreach"--the search, find, and delivery

of aid in the ex-offender's "natural habitat." The hard lessons of OEO, Head Start, and Public Health have not permeated the structure and functions of agencies which expressed willingness, if not responsibility, for helping the ex-offender.

More important, however, is the finding of this same survey that the agencies seldom know when to, how to, or what kind of assistance to offer this special disadvantaged group. And while such a situation may reflect the community's historical concern with the "good poor," nearly all agencies stated that they would be willing to extend services to the ex-offender--that their policies were not those of exclusion. The question, though, of just what services to render and how to deliver them was honestly raised. An exception was the parole office, but here again supervision and aid were available only to parolees; even this group requires more and different kinds of aid than that office can give. Thus, the parole office refers its clients to other agencies for help--Mental Health, Vocational Rehabilitation, Welfare, etc.

Thus, a strong case can be made for a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the control and prevention of crime and delinquency in the community. No approach is comprehensive, however, without (1) a differential treatment approach to individual offenders and (2) the systematic focusing of services from relevant community agencies. Any effective community corrections model must contain these two core ingredients. But to propose these features sounds like other nostrums and pat "solutions" we daily give for the very complex problems of recidivism reduction. Criticisms and suggestions that are not or cannot be translated into specific and demonstrably effective behavior by parole supervisors, trial judges, and probation officers are a waste of time. Motivation is no longer needed; specific courses of action are. These courses of action will not be simple ones. They cannot be summarized in glittering generalities, nor can they bypass grass-root fundamentals.

Examples of Community Corrections

Community corrections consists of an array of services that seek to deal with community problems of crime and delinquency--including those of prevention and treatment, transition from the institution to the community, diversionary efforts to prosecution and imprisonment, and other problems of adult offenders and juvenile delinquents.

Community-based treatment differs widely in orientation. The examples of the Project Crossroads' pre-trial diversion program (Lieberg, 1971), which follows a manpower training

orientation, and the North Carolina juvenile courts program (James, 1970), which follows a behavior modification orientation, represent vastly different approaches with correspondingly different results. Project Crossroads reported a decrease in adult recidivism but across-the-board failure with juveniles, while the North Carolina project reported success with both probated and incarcerated delinquents.

Proposal for a Center for Studies in Community Corrections

Every state, I believe, should create what might be entitled a "Center for Studies in Community Corrections." Such a Center would seek to devise new directions and strategies in community corrections. It would establish an experimental-demonstration program that would (1) concentrate study efforts on specific target groups, e.g., the released offender and the juvenile and adult probationer; (2) apply recently developed behavior modification strategies to a target group; and (3) serve as a training station for professional and paraprofessional workers in community corrections.

The Center would offer two core programs–one operated within the Center itself and the other directed toward the coordination and delivery of relevant community services to the offender or ex-offender. In the first instance, the Center would accept referrals from other agencies seeking services for their clients–juvenile and adult. Thus, the courts, police, parole supervisors, vocational rehabilitation, etc. would refer selected ex-offenders to the Center to receive such treatment and services as behavior modification, basic education, job-related training, and vocational evaluation and counseling.

The second core program offered by the Center would be that of arranging effective community involvement through a unique behavior modification technique called "contingency contracting." This approach involves an agreement between client and relevant agencies to provide both positive and negative reinforcers contingent upon specific measurable behaviors by contractually agreeing parties. The Center would be a viable, developmental endeavor with broad community support and participation. It would be experimental–since we know too little about how to maintain an offender free of crime and imprisonment. It could be a prototype for other types of Centers that would be in other communities. It would not supplant other community-based operations but would feed into them new knowledge, new techniques, new directions, and new skills. It would be directly linked to a university; in fact, it may be even operated by a university or a nonprofit organization. It would not be "beholdin" to any agency, public or private, rather it would serve all. Such a Center is feasible, needed, and can contribute much

to the understanding of what needs to be done in the field of control and prevention of crime and delinquency.

A Technology for Corrections

My final prediction concerns the technology which will develop as a common vehicle for implementing the programs I have discussed. This technology--called, in its various forms, operant conditioning, behavior modification, behavior therapy, and behavioral counseling--will effectively unite those various agencies which deal with the offender by providing a network of common and objectively stated goals *and* a methodology for more effectively achieving those goals. This behavioral technology, as I am sure most of you are aware, is a relatively new approach to the modification or remediation of deviant or troublesome human behavior. It is a technology which has its origins in the experimental psychological laboratory, and it is unique in this respect, for it is the only approach to the understanding of human behavior which is based on scientific investigation rather than upon philosophical theorizing. The technology itself views behavior as learned, determined by its consequences, and as changeable by the appropriate use of the principles of learning and the contingencies of reinforcement.

The value of this approach has already been demonstrated in a number of other settings--the mental hospital, the school classroom, the military, and, more recently, in homes and instititions for predelinquent and delinquent young adults. The behavioral approach is, by most standards, more effective than the more orthodox approaches it is replacing--and by more effective I mean it typically results in more change in the same amount of time as its alternatives, or the same amount of change in less time. When corrections can no longer ignore the full impact of these findings, we will experience a revolution in correctional practices comparable to that which occurred in mental health a decade ago.

The work we are now doing in the Experimental Manpower Laboratory for Corrections has convinced us that the behavioral approach is a viable alternative to the procedures which are employed in most correctional settings. I am optimistic that what we, and others, are doing in this area is pointing out the direction corrections will take in the remainder of this century.

The New Prisoner: Impetus for Change

In this paper I have described a number of positive trends and opportunities that are now open to corrections. I have also spent some time describing the evils of corrections

and the problems that exist, hopefully pointing out some alternatives and solutions. Before I conclude, I wish to mention one other major problem that is confronting correctional institutions throughout the nation–that of riots and disturbances in the institutions themselves. I do not intend to suggest how to handle riots, but I would like to describe what I believe to be effective preventive measures.

As is being witnessed in prisons throughout the nation, the new prisoner is more articulate and more politicized than he has been in the past. He is demanding that we deal with him differently. He can't be terrorized as he was in the past because he now has more access to the outside world than he ever had before. But there are a number of things which can be done to combat some of the causes which generate disturbances–one of the major causes being simply that many inmates don't believe that anybody really cares about them.

One effective measure that can be taken is to create and promote intensive interaction on the part of the correctional staff with the inmates–not only by the correctional officers but by the warden and the deputy wardens. Even top administration should interact at times. The correctional staff must want to interact with inmates and to become role models for them. When strong positive relationships are established on a one-to-one basis, the inherent trust and loyalty which they bring can begin to bridge the gap between the normally polarized worlds of the administration and the inmate subculture. The fears and hostilities, which are real to *both* groups, can be diluted. Rather than inmates receiving the officers as their natural enemy, they can begin to see that correctional officers are in fact interested in improving the inmate lot.

Moreover, the frequent visiting with inmates and their relatives, the acceptance of complaints, and the positive action taken on behalf of the inmates, when justified, could possibly eliminate the need for a list of inmate demands, which usually generates resistance and hostility by its very presentation to the authorities. But, no matter how well an institution is run, instances can and do occur that generate fears and hostilities. There are accumulated frustrations in a prison, and a sudden incident–a white inmate cuts a black inmate–creates a potentially dangerous situation that demands immediate intervention by the administration and by informal inmate groups. A strong positive relationship between administration and inmates can function, when the occasion presents itself, as a kind of safety valve which neutralizes the explosive potential of an incident.

Conclusion

On the national level, the "new prisoner" may be the long-awaited impetus to spirit corrections to a new awareness of itself. Rather than just one more entry in an already burdened list of problems, the "new prisoner" may prove to be the "Janus" emblem of modern corrections, the pivotal point in time from which we can assay the past, learn from it, and also view the future with revived conviction and direction. The technology, the emerging financial support, and the bank of valuable programs and proven ideas which exist in modern corrections truly puts us on the threshold of an opportunity for singular achievement.

In closing I would like to speak not to the future of American corrections as a whole, but to American corrections as they are illustrated here in Hawaii. Over the years I, and many others, have been impressed by the hard work and intelligent planning which has gone into Hawaiian corrections. At present, resources second to none are available to correctional institutions and agencies, particularly from the University of Hawaii, which has established itself as a first-rate educational institution. The state of Hawaii is now on a kind of threshold of its own, finding itself with most capable leadership, an efficient system of organization, and a wealth of resources and information. The final step which can put Hawaii ahead and truly enable it to offer advanced leadership to all who would seek new directions in corrections is the same step which is needed in all of American corrections--to unite firmly and to head unswervingly toward the single objective of integrating the offender back into the social community of American citizens.

ERIC Clearinghouse
MAR 14 1972
on Adult Education

15